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How to Make Your
Mark in Life

E. ELLIOT DURANT

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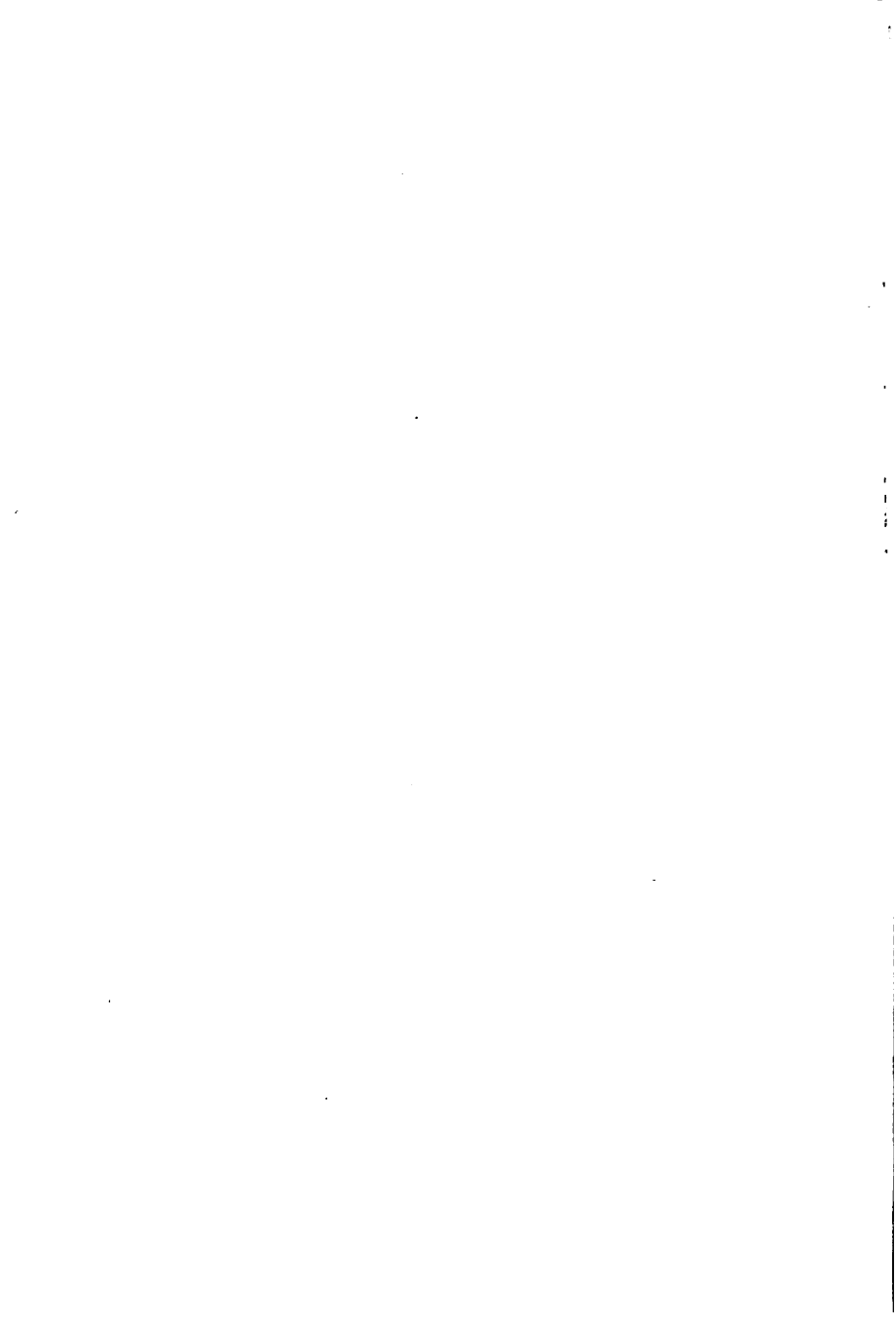
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FROM

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President

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How to Make Your Mark in Life

BY
E. ELLIOT DURANT

AUTHOR OF
"LEISURE MOMENTS," "THE MYSTERIES OF THE
EARTH AND HEAVENS," "ROYALTY
IN BARBADOS," ETC.



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To
The Rising Generation,
and Generations
Yet to Come

'Twixt what thou art and what thou wouldst be, let
No "if" arise on which to lay the blame.

Man makes a mountain of that puny word,
But, like a blade of grass before the scythe,
It falls and withers when a human will,
Stirred by creative force, sweeps towards its aim.

Thou wilt be what thou couldst be. Circumstance
Is but the toy of genius. When a Soul
Burns with a God-like purpose to achieve,
All obstacles between it and its goal
Must vanish as the dew before the sun.

"If" is the motto of the dilettante
And idle dreamer: 'tis the poor excuse
Of mediocrity. The truly great
Know not the word, or know it but to scorn;
Else had Joan of Arc a peasant died
Uncrowned by glory and by men unsung.

— *Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*



“Determination, or persistent effort, is one of the greatest things in the world. The young man who starts out with the one purpose of being a statesman, a merchant, a financier or a physician, and sticks to his one idea, or determination, will seldom fail to reach the desired goal, provided he has the natural aptitude.”



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How to Make Your Mark in Life

CHAPTER I

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

“Good sense will stagnate. Thought shut up
wants air

And spoils like bales unopened to the Sun —
Thought, too, delivered is the most possessed;
Teaching, we learn, and giving, we retain
The births of intellect; when dumb, forget.
Speech ventilates our intellectual fire;
Speech burnishes our intellectual magazine:
Brightens for ornament and whets for use.
What numbers, sheathed in erudition, lie
Plunged to the hilts in venerable tones,
And rusted in; who might have borne an edge,
And played a sprightly beam if born to speech,
If born blest heirs of half their mothers' tongue!”

IN different periods of the history of the world the circulation of essays as a mode of imparting instruction to others, and of conveying our thoughts and ideas to stimulate others to habits of virtue, manliness, independence and honor, has been effectual to a considerable

extent. Many and varied have been the themes with which able exponents have exhaustibly dealt; but there is none, I think, religious subjects excepted, more adapted to the wants of an enlightened and progressive age than that which I have chosen for my present subject. This is an age of marked progress in art, science, literature, ethics, and politics, and any efforts elevating to our better nature, calculated to lever us up to the level of public thought, spirit, and sentiment, and to land us on the platform with our better-informed neighbors cannot fail to earn the gratitude they so richly merit. For my own part I do not believe that, any well-prepared essay on a fit subject has ever been wholly fruitless.

A knowledge of organization plays no unimportant part in determining the end for which creatures exist. In fact this may be considered the *regia via* to a correct solution of the problem, an unfailing rule by which we arrive at correct results. It is by a strict and detailed examination of plants that we arrive at a correct estimate of their functions. Geological researches have unearthed the compositions of the earth's strata, and we thus utilize her rocks and depositions. The Science of Ornithology rests

on the careful study of the organizations of birds, while the minor classifications, such as frugivorous, for example, are due to the study of dendrology. The foundation on which Ichthyology rests is due to investigations made by scientific men on the structure of inhabitants of the watery world; and man the noblest specimen of the finished work of Creation is not the least deserving of critical investigation. It is by a diligent study of his organization that we arrive at a knowledge of the high and important end for which he is fitted. True, we frequently estimate our own dimensions in figures too gigantic for human conception, and for the short limited life which is ours, or, it may be that we settle down in the limbo of silence and obscurity, because we conceive that out of nothing there can come nothing; or again, it may be that we are desirous of maturing our plans regardless of the necessary period of incubation. In aiming at a standard of perfection attainable only by the genius of a Praxiteles, or the talent of a Michael Angelo, we reach a limit, which by the use of a trope may be termed the freezing point of our intellect; or, in underestimating our own capacity we lead a life of torpidity broken here and there

by spells of admiration at the achievement of others — a power which even idiots are not wholly devoid of. Be it as it may, the very organization of man is the direct philosophical revelation of design. Yet, says a writer — “We do not totally condemn the idea of proposing as the object of our pursuit some station even beyond our abilities, some imaginary excellence which may amuse and serve to animate our enquiry; in all probability we may reach several discoveries by the way.” Thus it was that Bottger the German in attempting to make gold in 1706, discovered the art of making porcelain. Yet it often happens that because a man has not ascertained the bent of his genius, or his capacity to excel in some particular pursuit, he conceives himself to be incapable of accomplishing anything noble, and under this misconception he trails through life leaving no mark whatever behind him. To be unlike the amateur it were well that every man should get to know that as a man he is an intelligent being, and as such he exists for a purpose, and to carry out that purpose he must accomplish something; but it is to a great extent necessary that that something be determined beforehand, and for this purpose a knowledge of his ances-

try and of their career and above all a thorough knowledge of himself, if possible, are necessary in determining the life-leap a man should make. How came such men as Roger Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Isaac Newton, William Shakespeare, George Chapman, Francis Bacon, and George Herbert? What made these physical and mental giants? — It was their parentage. These men are samples of their ancestry; but they are also samples of the race to which they belong. Hence, I assert that it is of some importance to a man that he ascertain the race, the ancestry, the characteristics of his people before he determines the course in life he should pursue if he would ensure a certain measure of success. This is most strikingly traceable in the offspring of men of musical ability. Mozart, Handel, Beethoven, and a goodly number of Italian professors of the divine art, sprang from a musical stock, hence their wisdom and safety in pursuing a similar career. An example of this may be found to-day in the Gittens' family in Barbados, British West Indies, every member of that family being gifted with that celestial art. Some will object to this rule as being too limited in its application. Not so, however; it seeks not to

restrain natural genius when directed in its proper channel, for as water will always find its own level, so will true genius work out its own end where it finds the facility for so doing. What the rule claims is that certain discretionary measures should be adopted by every man who would make his mark in life before he ventures to embark on the ocean of life, so that he be not subjected to too much tacking which occasions not only loss of valuable time, but the recovery, if possible, of lost ground. I am quite aware that from the most illiterate families there have occasionally sprung some of the greatest geniuses, and that master-minds have not unfrequently egressed from the humblest cot. Nor can this be considered a freak of the mental law of Nature by which men are called into distinction, although it may be a leap in the chain of evolution by which certain stages of advancement are passed over to accomplish a special end, and it may be at or within a given time. All of this I am ready to admit; but the rule remains, that it is well for a man to know himself directly and indirectly as far back as he possibly can go. In knowing something of his ancestry, a man gets to know something of himself, and is better able to gauge his ability;

—and to know one's self well is worth all else that we may know. Alexander the Great knew how to conquer the formidable legion of Persia; but knew not the strength of his own passions. Caesar triumphed in a hundred battles; but knew not how to control that restless spirit of ambition which eventually became his ruin. To know one's self is one of the most useful and comprehensive precepts in the whole moral system, and it is well known in how great veneration this maxim was held by the ancients, and in how high esteem the duty of self-examination necessary to it. Thales the Milesian, the prince of the philosophers, who flourished about A. M. 3330, is said by the best authorities to be the author of it. He used to say that for a man to know himself is the hardest thing in the world. It was afterwards adopted by Chylon the Lacedemonian; and it is one of those three precepts which Pliny affirms to have been consecrated at Delphos in golden letters. It was afterwards greatly admired and adopted by others, till at length it acquired the authority of an oracle, and was in heathen mythology ascribed to Apollo himself — of which general opinion Cicero gives us this reason: — “Because it has such a weight of sense and wisdom

in it as appears too great to be attributed to any man." And the opinion of its coming from Apollo himself was, perhaps, the reason that it was written in golden capitals over the door of the temple at Delphos. Touching this immaculate precept, Pope thus speaks:—

“Know then thyself; presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man,
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state
A being darkly wise and rudely great;
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side
With too much greatness for the stoic's pride;
He hangs between, in doubt to act or rest,
In doubt to deem himself a God or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reasoning such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much;
Chaos of passion, passions all confused,
Still by himself abused or disabused;
Created half to rise, half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet prey to all;
Sole judge of truth; in endless error hurl'd,
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!”

There is hardly a man of intelligence who does not admit the importance of this precept. It is upon such knowledge only that we aim at a given standard. And the necessity for some such stimulus you admit. The motto on the walls of the Grecian Temple at Delphos ascribed

to Pericles, one of the archons, was, "Nothing is impossible to industry!" Under this stimulus much was accomplished. Amongst those of the Romans was, "Nil desperandum." Business men have had their mottoes. That of one English firm was, "Sharp!" By this all their business transactions were regulated. Another's was, "Intempore!" This was stamped on the fly-leaf of their books, on the wristbands of the shirt-sleeves of the employees, and on the front of the premises. Another's was, "Come about your business, settle your business, go about your business, and leave me to attend my business!" Warriors have had their war-cries and watch-words. One of Nelson's was, "Westminster Abbey, or Victory!" And in the latter part of the Sepoy Rebellion the war cry of the British troops was, "Remember Cawnpore!" Private characters and men of literature have acted to certain mottoes: the elder Herschell's was, "Make the most of time!" To him every misspent moment was as a dagger to his heart. Dillon's was "Dum Spiro, Spero!" Addison, "I write not for time; but for eternity!" Dundas' was, "Never behind!" That of a certain Persian nobleman was, "Press forward!" You will doubtless admit that many

of these mottoes are full of pith and vigor, and are eminently calculated to animate those who hear them to press forward to the attainment of a noble end. The individual who lives having no aim in view is almost certain to set no value on time, and can never leave an imperishable reputation behind him. Pliny compares life to a river; and as we think of that stream of water, small and clear, first gushing forth from a well in the court-yard of a nobleman in the Black Forest, falling into deep glens, meandering through a wild and picturesque scenery, deepening and widening in its flow in obedience to a law peculiar to itself until in magnitude it becomes the first of European Rivers and is lost in the mighty abyss of waters, we readily realize the fancy and strength of imagination which possessed the mind of the great naturalist, and gave birth to the unrivalled metaphor — Life is a river! The various stages through which human life passes — the vicissitudes to which it is subject — the modes of transition from helpless infancy to maturity — the harmonious blending of mental and physical qualities entering into the stages of development through which it wends its way until it reaches what may be termed its zenith, when the broad

world itself seems as a circle too narrow for its dimensions;—how happy the comparison!—How sublime the thought!—How God-like the flight of imagination which likens life to the continuous flow of a river! The apathy of the present age leads some more readily to admire than to imitate the fervor of the early pioneers of art and industry. We seem to be wholly incapable of conceiving the motives which transported our fathers to an atmosphere beyond the region of stupid insensibility, constituted them models of manliness, and placed them amongst the fairest specimens of human pride both for vigor of intellect and enthusiasm. This lack of enthusiasm is merely due to a state of torpor into which we have lapsed because we look too much to others and too little to our own energies and exertions. There is a class of metals called hydrophanous which does not become transparent till immersed in water. So it is with certain characters; the fire of ardor and enthusiasm is necessary to draw out their latent capacities, and to transport them beyond themselves, by getting them to duly appreciate themselves. The idea of making our mark in Life necessarily implies a certain amount of self-exertion; but it is not designed to discour-

age the receiving of aid from others. Such aid should only be sought as an expedient. When a man has earned money it is time enough then for him to procure a cash-box wherein to secure it. In some cases this is found to be a necessity. In others it is not. Wherever one can carve his way independently of another's tools let him never ask for them, nor accept them if offered. In the event of his making a frequent use of them he severs a ligament in the solidity of a principle which may so weaken that principle as to affect his whole future career. A man's sole determination should be to put his own shoulder to the wheel and leave his neighbor to do the same. It is this spirit that has suggested experiments which have given birth to great and lasting results for which the world is to-day grateful. It is not probable that a workman would lend another his tools or his money day after day unless he received some compensation for doing so; and it is this unlucky business that has lessened self-dependence on the one hand, and created usurers on the other, and established a rule antagonistic to manliness, self-reliance, and independence. Smiles in his "Self-Help" assures us that Haydn the painter dated his decline from the

day he first borrowed money. The faculty of speech is only made perfect by daily exercise; by this the wonderful power of thought and reason are exercised, and from small beginnings often flow great and mighty issues. Many who would otherwise have been great have spun out a passive existence so far as results are concerned because their most precious moments have been wasted in seeking aid from others — aid which they never received, while within themselves and at their disposal there were ample means for facilitating the accomplishment of the object after which they sought — “Like a flower born to blush unseen and to waste its sweetness on the desert air;” — while others steadily pursuing a different course have by plans and efforts of their own counted the stars, weighed the mountains, measured the ocean, and computed the force of the wind. Opic, when asked by what wonderful process he mixed his colors, replied, “I mix them with my brains, Sir!” Ferguson made his marvelous wooden clock that accurately measured the hours of the day with a common penknife. A pan of water and two thermometers were the means by which Dr. Black discovered latent heat. By means of a prism, a lens, and a sheet

of pasteboard Newton unfolded the composition of light and the origin of color. A burnt stick and a barn door served Wilkie in lieu of pencil and canvas. Benjamin West made his first brushes out of the cat's tail. Franklin first robbed the thunder cloud of its lightning by means of a kite made of two cross-sticks and a silk handkerchief. Watt made his first model of the condensing steam engine out of an anatomist's old syringe. Gifford, when still a cobbler's apprentice, worked his first problem in mathematics upon small scraps of leather beaten smooth for the purpose, while Kittenhouse, the astronomer, first calculated eclipses on his plough handle. Men of this class impress us with the fact that the true road to advancement consists in setting in motion a man's personal machinery, physical and mental, preserving that motion when once begun, subject to certain rules acting in obedience to the dictates of reason and nature.

CHAPTER II

LABOR

IN entering on the second part of this treatise I would point to labor as a means by which self-advancement may be encouraged. Labor becomes every creature since every creature is made to labor. There is a solemn dignity attached to toil, and a reverence due to those who duly appreciate the responsibility. Whatever sphere of life's world of toil a man engages in, there is something for him to do, and that something should be done with all his might. If it is undertaken listlessly and half-heartedly it then becomes a nausea, which any honest labor was never designed to be. The happiest mortals are those who regularly busy themselves at some calling, who know what weariness is, who wipe the sweat from their brow, who carry with them a wrinkled, weather-beaten cheek, hard hands, and a tanned skin. These are entitled to rest from a life of protracted toil. Rest is the reward of toil; and is due to the industrious husbandman, the hard laboring artisan, the

honest pedlar, the busy merchant, the plodding student, the shrewd statesman, the busy housewife, the diligent mother. In the world there is no room for idleness and idlers; such drones in the hive can at best consume the sweets amassed by their diligent neighbors, and so reduce the quantity against the approach of winter. But active labor carries with it a fuller reward. It entitles the laborer to an earldom or a knighthood, which if not bestowed under the banners of a gaudy pageantry nevertheless distinguishes the son of toil from the indolent and apathetic by the benefit which it confers upon the world, and the gratitude with which it is received. How much the mercantile and engineering world owe to the untiring energies of Watt and Stephenson can be better seen than described. Surely this is sufficient apart from personal considerations to incite us to a life of continuous activity. But were we to consider this question from a selfish point of view we would urge the necessity which exists for a life of labor. Surely every man owes something to himself — a natural and a reasonable debt which can only be best discharged by exertion. To pay this debt should be the steady aim of every individual, and for this purpose the life

of a Methuselah is too short. But social economy, patriotism, and benevolence drive us beyond the narrow precincts of self, and waft us into the broad beaten track of philanthropy — the good of others — man's noblest and greatest end. Nature's law is labor. The sun exists not for ornament merely, but to give us light. The stars at every twinkle impress us with the idea of labor. The fast moving comets circumscribing orbits of an inconceivable circumference, and whose rapid rate of motion almost baffles the skill of figures, impart to us a lesson of self-exertion. The flow of rivers; the constant whirling motion of the great mass of oceanic waters; the aerial ocean overhead in its zephyrs, gales, storms, tempests, devastating tornadoes, and blinding harmattans — the busy insect world; the hum of the early bee; the chirp of the sparrow; the twitter of the swallows; the lowing of the herd;—as also the creeping mint; the clasping ivy; the bulky shrub; and the majestic oak furnish just so many lessons in unmistakable language of the end for which "the lord of creation" is designed. To say otherwise is to betray a most unpardonable ignorance of the great book of Nature. And beyond the visible offing of this lower world as gath-

ered from Holy Writ the angelic watchword is something to do. No matter where we are we should feel uneasy unless we are able profitably to employ our time for the benefit of others and for the good of ourselves. The world, "God's workshop," as Henry Beecher calls it, has reached its present state through the diligent labor of her many sons and daughters who duly estimated their mission; and these have handed down to us, their successors in the race of life, the grave responsibility that lies in our inalienable inheritance — labor. That man is a fool of his own making who by despising labor seeks to prey upon the exertions of his assiduous neighbor, and in the end to become an unwelcome burden — for such every idler must become — on the charity of those who live for truly philanthropic purposes. In this matter the right of choice or taste should not rest with us, hence the apathetic has no haven outside the Apragopolis in which he may hope to find an asylum, nor has he another friend so considerate as Caesar Augustus. A man may have the taste and the capacity for learning and philosophy, or for mathematics; or he may have the aptitude and the capacity for acquiring languages; but every healthy individual undoubtedly

possesses in a greater or less degree the physical qualification for labor of some sort, since it is upon the exercise of this quality that the development of his highest and noblest powers is brought about. It is through labor that he serves the end for which he was designed, and through which he preserves in distinguished honor the immeasurable distance there is betwixt irrational beings and himself. Webster affirms labor to be one of the great elements of society — the greatest substantial interest on which we all stand. This reads almost like an axiom; but the great curse of the world is that the self-evident assertion, fraught as it is with truth contained in this living principle, is neither universally acknowledged nor systematically acted upon. Men seem ashamed of labor. Often you will find men who have made themselves respected by labor, who have built up a business and amassed a fortune, saying to their sons, "You shall never do as I did. You shall lead a different life." These sons aim to lead a life of emasculated idleness and laziness, squandering in dissipation and folly what their wise fathers amassed. Like the polyp that floats uselessly on the sea — all jelly and no muscle, no bone, opening and shutting, shutting

and opening — such are these poor fools! Their parents toiled, and grew strong, built up their forms of iron and bone; but denying all this to their sons they turn them upon the world boneless, muscleless, and worse than that! Such is the outcome of modern society as it exists at the present day, that one of the elements of gentility is either a life of vapidty — so far as labor is concerned, or a life of profound laziness. Such youths cannot become good and useful citizens. The wisdom of the wise and the unselfishness of the benevolent in a bygone age led them to grasp the truth contained in Webster's axiom; and those men, reducing it to practise, are yet speaking to us, though long dead. The mighty empires of antiquity and renown whose greatness is now to be gathered only from the pages of history and from the relics of an antique civilization, had a great appreciation for the dignity of labor, as shown in their living monumental works of art, and in the fragments of colossal works of unparalleled greatness. The walls and hanging gardens of the Babylonians; the ruins of the celebrated temple of Apollo at Castri, the unrivalled architectural works of Athens under the superintendence of Cecrops as early as B. C. 1556; the stone-lipped

sphinx at Ghizeh; the statue of Jupiter Olympus; the Catacombs of Egypt; the grand pyramid near the ancient City of Cairo, covering eleven acres at its base with a summit towering to the skies, point as trophies to the laborious greatness of the illustrious dead! But interwoven with the policy of those nations was the vital question of labor. The Ethiopians acquainted their youths that they were born to labor by accustoming them betimes to fling great stones. Solon, one of the wise men of Greece, made a law that those who would not work should not eat. The Great Council of the Areopagites enquired how every man lived, and punished those who were found idle. The Egyptians held that no man was too noble to have a calling. Among the Locrians he that lent money to an idle person could not legally recover it. Among the Corinthians idle persons were delivered to the Carnifex. The censores morum among the Romans were to observe who were idle or diligent in their vocations, and accordingly to condemn or commend them. By a later law of the Athenians, also due to Solon's legislation, every idle person was to suffer death. By a law of Mohamed every Turk must follow some trade, the Grand Seigneur himself not excepted. Seneca

said he would rather be sick than be idle; and Bishop Hall has it "that the idle man is the devil's cushion on which he takes his free ease." Garfield the great, began life as a mule driver; Garibaldi, first as a sailor, second as a cattle dealer, third as a candle maker. President Lincoln started his career first as a laborer, and mule driver, second as a wood-cutter, third as a surveyor of land, and fourth as a lawyer. Metchnikoff from a baker's apprentice and domestic rose to be a distinguished general and diplomatist. But when would this list end? You might say, of course, that these men had favor shown to them. No. They were men who knew how to carve their way through the jungles of life. Not only nations but the earnest efforts of individuals appeal to the idler. It may be said we have grown beyond legislation in this matter; whether we have or not it is certain that we have sunk beneath this spirit of those who were wiser than ourselves. Burns the master of Scotch song, Palissy and Gibson famed for art, Stephenson and Watt to whom allusion has already been made for engineering skill, Gifford renowned for critical acumen,—Ferguson for abstract Science, and the elder Herschell were all hard laboring men,—men who did battle

with hunger and with pinching poverty,—men, who by their own efforts struggled like heroes against the adverse tide of class prejudice, and gained distinction by the sweat of their brow. These and many others have left an imperishable reputation behind them and reflect the sentiments of a well-known poet —

“Life is but a scene of labor,
Everyone’s his task assigned;
We must each assist his neighbor,
When we see him lag behind;
We must strive by emulation,
Man’s condition to improve,
And bend men of every station,
In a bond of mutual love.
All must then be up and stirring
With determination true.
Young men, old men, rich men, poor men,
Ye have all your work to do.”

CHAPTER III

DILIGENCE

I HAVE endeavored to show that labor befits every man. It is a garment which he can never outgrow. If you admit this you will see that with labor diligence should be associated. This expression is derived from *diligo*, I select, choose, or love. "Love," not in the sense of *Amo*, which has reference to a warm passionate affection for a single object or individual,—such an affection as may be spent so soon as the object of its affection may be gratified. *Diligo* means something more than this; it means the embodiment of a principle which lives in our own life and influences that life. The abstract worker is a man of very spare mental calibre, and is not the right copy for a man to imitate. Abstract labor accomplishes but little, while diligence in any undertaking invariably contributes to success. As there is a certain metrical rhythm essential to healthy breathing, so there is a continuity and earnestness that are the very life of labor, and without which all labor event-

ually languishes and dies. Diligence is the fuel by which labor is supported. He who would be a successful artist must go beyond the amateur part of his work; he must study the soil in which he would sow his seed; he must water, prune, weed, transplant, manure,—in a word, he must toil diligently in anticipation of the reaping season.

Professor Schoendorf in an address to certain German students, offers amongst others, the following useful hints:—"Apply yourselves with energy and activity to the discharge of whatever duties you undertake. Although they may appear irksome at first, they will at length become tolerable and agreeable. Fly from the first approaches of discontent and stifle her clamors with the cheerful voice of activity and business."

Years ago a little boy entered the Harrow School. He was placed in a class beyond his years, where all the scholars had the advantage of previous instruction denied to him. His master chided him for his dullness, and all his efforts could not raise him from the lowest place in the class. Nothing daunted, the little chap procured the grammars and text books that his class-fellows had gone through in previous

terms, and employing all his play hours and not a few of his hours of sleep, it was not long before he not only rose to the top of the class, but became the pride of Harrow. The statue of that boy was subsequently set up in St. Paul's Cathedral, for he lived to be the greatest Oriental scholar in modern Europe — It was Sir William Jones.

By dint of diligence anything possible may be done, and hillocks of apparent impossibilities may be minimized and made to vanish in the distance.

It was said of Sir Robert Peel that by a diligent application to Parliamentary duties he knew the Blue Books by heart. Many of the great political leaders, such as Pitt, Channing, Castlereagh, etc., etc., rose to distinction mainly by their diligence. The same may be said of such eminent judges as Clarendon, Sir Philip Warwick, Sir William Coventry, Ashley, Burke, Thurlow, Pitt, Mansfield, Eldon and Peel. Of such men it has been said, that in scaling the ladder of life, there was nothing too hard for them to do. Now it is the application we look to rather than the rule or the sphere of labor in which we are engaged; hence what applies to individuals living in one age is equally appli-

cable to others in any age where the principal means to advancement are centred within themselves. And if diligence is a successful lever by which men may raise themselves from the lowest positions to some stratum, social, mental, moral, or otherwise, compatible with their physical or intellectual attributes, by all means in our power let us strive to acquire the habit where it is alien to our natures, and where it is indigenous to the climate of our being let us cultivate its growth until it attains its full development. A volume might be written on this subject, but enough has been said to mark its importance. If you turn to the infallible word of God you will find there a number of precepts which prompt to diligence,—“Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.” “The hand of the diligent maketh rich.” “Seest thou a man diligent in business? He shall stand before Kings; he shall not stand before mean men.” These and kindred passages strongly emphasize the importance of diligence in contrast with indolence and apathy. But this leads us to the next subject.

CHAPTER IV

INDUSTRY

MEN not unfrequently speak of Industry and diligence as synonymous terms; but this is not so. As the ocean deepens the further you go into it, so increased diligence deepens and broadens, and acquires a new force which we call Industry. The diligence of the bee is seen as she plods from flower to flower gathering up the sweets to be subsequently concentrated into honey — that being her one unwearying pursuit; but there her diligences ceases. A boy may be diligent and painstaking at his lessons, but a complete sluggard at everything else. No one would think of calling him industrious. One woman may be a diligent wife, another may be an industrious one; while the former aims at the accomplishment of a special object, the latter comprehends the widest possible range for the exercise of her assiduity. The one like the weaver's shuttle works out; the other is always taking in. An industrious man is often wearied with working, but he is never weary of

his work. The diligent husbandman yearns after the accomplishment of his task; the assiduous husbandman seeks out fresh fields to gratify his spirit of enterprise. Surely these terms are not synonymous. Diligence is commendable; Industry is the more so. To many these are meaningless distinctions. Their policy in life is neither dependent on labor, diligence, industry, or anything of the sort. They take time as it goes. But to sit down at our ease and fold our arms relying upon luck or chance to evolve us to distinction and independence is the result of a blind infatuation which has misguided thousands and is at the present moment misleading thousands more, who seem to lose sight of the fact that every human being has the germ of some flowers within him, which would open, if they could only find sunshine and air to expand in— a thought borne out by Pliny in one of his beautiful metaphors. True it is that here and there solitary instances may be cited of men rising into prominence by sheer force of accident; but even in such cases much depended on themselves. Walter Raleigh, by taking off his new plush coat and spreading it on the ground when the Queen scrupled to go over a dirty place won her favor and worked

his way into Court. When he saw the Queen's favor reflecting on him he wrote on a glass window obvious to her eye:—"Fain would I climb, but fear I to fall." Her Majesty, on seeing this inscription, wrote under it:—"If thy heart fail thee, climb not at all." How great a personage he afterwards became in that court is known to all readers of history. Though there may be many a Raleigh there may not be another Elizabeth, and the individual who blindly trusts to luck as a mode of transit from the glen of obscurity to the more verdant lawns of prosperity strongly reminds me of the blind who essays to be leader of the blind, until they are both hopelessly precipitated into the ditch of disappointment. A noble instance of Industry is given in the life of William Roscoe. That gifted man was almost self-taught, and indebted to his own efforts for his rise from a very humble station. His father was the master of a public house with gardens and a bowling green at Liverpool. William Roscoe quitted school at twelve years of age and assisted his father in cultivating potatoes for sale. When they had attained their proper growth he and his father took them to market for sale. In this way he spent several years of his life, amassed a fortune, acquired

a rich fund of knowledge, and when he rose to distinction he frequently said, "If I were asked whom I considered the happiest men I should say, those who cultivated the earth with their own hands." Mr. Roscoe afterwards represented his native town in Parliament, and became the author of a life of Pope Leo X, and a life of Lorenzo de Medici. Thus it is true, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." By Industry servants have grown to be masters—soldiers, to become commanders. Justinus from an industrious herd-boy became a diligent soldier; from a soldier he grew to be a great Commander, and from a Commander he became one of the best Emperors of the world. But this is not all. The Kings of Hungary are derived from Lechus II, who was a husbandman; and the Romans raised their Commonwealth not upon patricians, but upon the strength, ardor, industry, and enthusiasm of plebians — men fetched from the plough! — God speed the plough.

CHAPTER V

PERSEVERANCE

IN erecting this huge structure if you take knowledge of self as the basis followed up by Labor, Diligence and Industry you would grant perseverance to be the coping-stone. It matters little whether a man is hard-laboring, if he lacks perseverance his most laudable efforts will eventually come to naught. Perseverance overcomes difficulties. The adage, "Rome was not built in a day," has always a truth about it. From an obscure village the Metropolis of Italy rose to great importance, and subsequently became the mistress of the ancient world; but the various stages through which it passed in reaching its aggrandisement serve as a lesson of encouragement to us. Every country possessing any degree of strength traces its rise to men of indomitable courage and perseverance. This virtue is indispensably necessary to all, from the literary student down to the man of the field who may have fixed his mind on the attainment of a certain object.

How many failures do we see among men and women who might have excelled in arts and sciences, and who seem furnished with the talents equal to the greatest discoveries, had the pathway not been rendered inaccessible from the want of perseverance, while others of moderate ability have become famous, because, having aimed at a certain end, they stuck to it with that admirable tenacity which inevitably overcomes obstacles and leads to the goal of one's ambition. Disraeli might well have given up after his first attempt in the House of Commons. Many men would never have opened their lips there again. But there is an ever living sublimity in his words;—"The day will come when you will be glad to hear me." The great non-conformist preacher, Robert Hall, broke down in his first attempt to preach extempore, and if I mistake not, in his second; but he did not give up. But for perseverance Tennyson might have given up after the sharp review of his earliest volume; and his efforts resulted in Lord Tennyson — the Poet Laureate! Lord Byron might have given up after the sarcasm directed against his "Hours of Idleness," and then the world would never have seen "Don Juan." Stephenson

might have given up when his Railway and his locomotive were laughed out of the Parliament Committee. Thackeray might have given up when the publishers refused to have anything to do with "Vanity Fair;" but, no; these self-made heroes were like the mathematicians of the old school, who having undertaken to solve a problem solved it. Beware of saying, "I can't." If in any undertaking you fail of success, try again, and if still you fail, try again, and if you still fail, well, go on trying. Thus it was that he who humbly learned of a spider won the battle of Bannockburn and secured the independence of the Scots. Neither looking backwards nor standing still ever conquered a city; achieved a work of art; amassed a fortune; wrote a book; or won a name! The cry of the world's great men has ever been — "Onward!" As a matter of fact there is no such thing as standing still amidst the busy throng who crowd the thoroughfares of life. You must either go forward after your momentary halt or you lag behind in the race of life. It was this that led Pompey the Great to exclaim,—*"It is necessary for me to go forward; but it is not necessary for me to live!"* It was this that inspired Caesar to cross the Rubicon

and to burn the ships to prevent a retrograde movement on the part of the soldiery. And it is this which has inspired me to pen this volume. But much may be learned from lessons of analogy. The leaves of some trees when they fall leave no trace behind; the scar left by their removal heals immediately. There are trees, however, on which the scars are permanent. The leaf drops off, but it leaves a seal-like impression behind it on the stem which neither succeeding growth, the varying luxuriance of spring and summer, nor the desolation of winter succeeds in obliterating;—the memory of the vanished leaf seems indelibly fixed, engraved, as it were with a pen of iron. The bulk of the tree may increase to that of a grove, but the signet mark left by the leaf which fell when it was a mere sapling still cleaves to it in the grandeur of old age. Is not the lesson of analogy here taught clear and impressive! That there are many who fade and drop off the tree of humanity, leaving no trace whatever of their existence behind them simply because they had no fixed object in view; or, if they had, they lacked the impetus of perseverance to spur them onward; while there are others who, when they depart from the stage of life leave

an impression deepened only by the flow of time — which only makes more distinct a vacancy whose purpose is to remind survivors of an irreparable loss. Think of this and associate with your noblest or meanest efforts — Perseverance.

CHAPTER VI

SPARE MOMENTS

I WOULD next urge the necessity there is for making the most of our spare moments. If you ask, why? The answer is, because the brevity of human life demands it. Time flies and every moment absolutely misspent is a moment absolutely lost leaving no other record than a blank behind it. The sum total of a life filled with vigor of three-score years and ten would appal if it did not dishearten us. An hour lost daily would during that period aggregate to about three years. And in three years the destiny of a man may be settled — what he is to be, or what he is not to be. A three-years' course of lectures qualifies the diligent student for a position in life which money could not possibly purchase, nor influence and friends fit him for. Or three years misapplied may live in our memories to reproach and to goad us. Hence it seems reasonable to assert that the individual who ruthlessly wastes three years not only accuses himself of having squandered

a fortune but of becoming a debtor to the world for not having died three years earlier. Considered in this light spare moments would be valued as spare pennies to be treasured up for future good. Just an hour's earlier rising every day and an hour's retiring later every night profitably employed would be six golden years contributing to health, wealth, and wisdom. There are many who shudder at the thought of wasting an hour — sixty consecutive minutes, yet never think that fragments of time aggregate into hours. This is where we make the mistake. Halle wrote his commentaries when on his circuit. Dr. Mason Good translated Lucretius in his carriage while as a physician he rode from door to door. One of the Chancellors of France penned a bulky volume in the successive intervals of daily waiting for dinner. Doddridge wrote his exposition chiefly before breakfast. Kirke White studied Greek, went over the nouns and verbs as he was going to and from a lawyer's office. Burney learned French and Italian while riding on horseback. Franklin laid the foundation of his wonderful stock of knowledge in dinner hours on evenings while a printer's boy. Barnes wrote his commentaries on early mornings. Rev. Dr.

Durant, the celebrated linguist, studied French, Spanish, Italian, Greek, and perfected his acquaintance with Hebrew while seated on the board of a tailor's shop; and his brother, a distinguished theologian, drank deep of the cup of historical literature at intervals while a saddler's apprentice.

CHAPTER VII

SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

THIS thought might have been treated in connection with spare moments, but for its importance, which demands a few brief and independent comments. Almost everyone knows how true it is, that, "Opportunities lost can never be recalled." No one knows that better than the writer. I remember a short time ago having read an old book on the subject — "A minute behind time." Well, I thought that had this book fallen into my hands at sixteen my course in life would have been very differently shaped. It portrayed in the most graphic style and eloquent language the case of a man who had an engagement to meet at nine o'clock in the morning; but by turning in a public house in company with another man he delayed his time by a single minute, and thus lost a fortune! You may be almost certain that another such opportunity hardly ever again presented itself to that individual during the remainder of his life. I have heard of a clergyman who

took strong exception to the expression, nine, sharp; arguing that nine meant nine; and that any attempt at qualification, was superfluous and un-English. This may be so; but it is nevertheless a wholesome and much needed reminder of the importance to be attached to time; and where great and mighty issues are involved, which like the pitching of a stone into the ocean interferes with the economy of a whole watery world, emphasis is specially agreeable. Opportunities, like many other things of value, present themselves to us in the round of life subject to an unknown law of their own, the operations of which we can in no way comprehend, and the exact moment to seize or allow them to slip is of momentous consequence. To the laggard this would be considered a rude sermon, and an entrenchment on human liberty; but a wise man would accept the hint to be on the *qui vive*, because upon the rapid unravelling of the many complications in the roll of time prizes are evolved which fall to our lot, and are eagerly caught by another more watchful than ourselves. Hence no period of our lives, be it early or late, is inopportune for seizing an opportunity. To some, opportunities occur at the spring-

time of life; to others, at the flood; to others again, at the ebb; while many watch on and on, and are only relieved at the wane.

CHAPTER VIII

UNITY, OR NATIONAL SENTIMENT

TO all nations and peoples Unity is an indispensable factor. Unity of purpose and action became the very backbone of the Roman Commonwealth during its rise, and so long as popular disaffection was kept down all went well. It is from unity, the fountain of all self-advancement, that sympathy springs. Where there is no unity there can be but little sympathy. I do not mean to say that there are not racial jealousies — in all countries, and among all peoples — deepening and mischievous in their effects. This is painfully manifest to all, and the intelligent observer cannot too strongly emphasize his disapprobation of an evil where such happens to be the result of ignorance, which is too often the case. Of course there are causes on which these jealousies seem at times to be well-founded. Our aim should be to help each other up the stair-case of life, for amidst a combination of weakness we thus acquire strength. But when a man having at-

tained the summit of security kicks at those who helped him up, and tumbles down heels over head those who seek to ascend, while he frowns at every aspiring brother and accuses him of rivalry, then it becomes a question as to just how far we should help each other without a moral guarantee that our reward shall not be kicks. What every nation needs is that unity which will help it to become great, prosperous, strong, loving and united. It was that unity which made Assyria the world's empire for centuries, and Nineveh the treasure-house of the nations. It was only when internal strife arose that the doom of Assyria was sealed; but the vengeance was executed by the coalition of the Medians and Babylonians. It was this dream of national unity which possessed Bismarck and aided him in the coalition of the German states which in the battle-fields of Europe, to-day, are manifesting the wisdom of unity. And it is that same unity which has saved the allied powers from being crushed by the mailed fist.

The great European struggle which is going on at the present time manifests more than ever that the people of every nation need to link themselves together under a voluntary

oath of national fealty, each individual being solemnly consecrated to the other's good, and as so many links in the national chain harmonizing into one continuous whole.

Trace the history of the decline and overthrow of the Roman Empire and it will be found that the poisonous bacilli which ate into the very vitals of the nation was more the result of internal discord than the attacks of the preying hordes of the Goths, Vandals, Huns, etc., as is too commonly supposed. Neither is it individual progress at which people should aim — a wealthy miser is of no more value to the state than a decided pauper.

National spirit invites emulation, and knows but little of the jealousy that the world countenances, except jealousy be the result of one's inability to vie with a rival. Then, alas, how mean, pitiable, and contemptible is such jealousy!

Ambition is needed, also: not that restless desire whose ultimatum is sure to be regret, failure and disappointment as evidenced in the career of the four greatest monarchs the world perhaps has ever witnessed; but ambition as a motive power to healthy action;—not that ambition which creates a vacuum, and in seeking

to fill that vacuum creates a greater vacuum still; no, I mean that incentive which bids us look up, up, up above the dusty pathway trodden by the feet of inert man — that power which seeketh not its own selfish end, but whose vitality is interwoven with all that is Benevolent, Patriotic, Philanthropic and Noble, and without which man is nothing.

Alexander wept when he had conquered the world and there was not another city left for him to conquer; and to satisfy his ambitious lust he set fire to a city and died in a scene of debauch. Hannibal filled three bushels with the gold rings of the slaughtered Knights, yet at last died by poison administered by his own hand,—unwept, unknown, and uncared for, a stranger in a foreign land. Caesar conquered 800 cities; dyed his garments with the gore of a million foes, and after all was stabbed by his best friends in the market place where he had achieved his greatest triumphs — this was the reward of his imperial greed! Napoleon at whose frown the world stood in awe died in exile, a vanquished monarch, a captive, on the barren plains of St. Helena,—a prey to unrestrained ambition! The world wants not that ambition which as surely as it leads restless

man up to the pinnacle of power and to the zenith of prosperity is all the while as steadily carving his name on the annals of posterity as a madman — a fool!

CHAPTER IX

INFLUENCE OF GOOD BOOKS

I HAVE elsewhere in this book urged the necessity for adopting some model as an incentive to life. Great and good men furnish the best. A great, good, and a right mind is a kind of divinity lodged in flesh. By great men, I mean those who have worked their way from the lowest to the highest possible positions in life mainly by their own exertions, and who are always in sympathy with little men and little measures. By good men, I mean those whose lives and actions are influenced by religion. Do you say that those who are living are beyond our reach, then I would remind you that many such have passed away, but they have left behind them a record which the lapse of time has not obliterated — they have shed a lustre on the world which the flight of ages has not dimmed. With them there was no question on whom their mantle should be cast; such indeed is alien to true greatness. Apart from the desire there could be no such reserve, since everyone

has within him the germs essential to greatness. Everyone may not be able to thrill an audience with his eloquence — or to astonish listeners with the acquirement of his varied stock of literary and scientific knowledge — or to rise to patrician estate — or to become a banker — or to be a Caesar, a Xerxes, a Napoleon, a Wellington — a Booker T. Washington — or to impart to an army some magic spell by which it may be able to perform miraculous feats of conquest. But every man may become useful, and may so wield an influence as to stamp the pressure of his character upon the lives of countless generations. Now we may become acquainted with the heroic deeds of the past by getting hold of the biographies of great men. As there is no company so bad but that a wise man may learn something from them to make himself better, so there is no book out of which a man may not gather something for his good. But the biographies of eminent men are specially fitted to inspire us with a nobleness of character peculiar to those whose excellence they portray. In this thought I am borne out by Dr. Barrow. This eminent authority says:—"No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as history or the tradition of re-

markable examples. Even those who have an abhorrence or indisposition toward other studies are yet often much taken with historical narrations, and such as those which present to us the lives and examples of good and great men." Caesar's favorite book was the life of Alexander the Great. Upon one occasion his friends found him sitting down with the book in his hand bathed in tears. In deep concern they asked him the reason why he wept. "Do you think," said he, "I have not sufficient cause for concern, when Alexander at my age reigned over so many conquered countries, and I have not one glorious achievement to boast." The career of Caesar was but a re-living of the life of Alexander. Dr. Franklin who lived to do good only received his earliest impressions from reading Cotton Mather's essays — to do good when young, and determined that his whole aim in life should be directed towards that end. Jeremy Bentham declared that the current of all his thoughts and studies was directed by a single phrase that caught his eye at the end of a pamphlet:—"The greatest good of the greatest number." George Low, a boy on his father's farm, came across an old unknown book, which told the story of a farmer's son

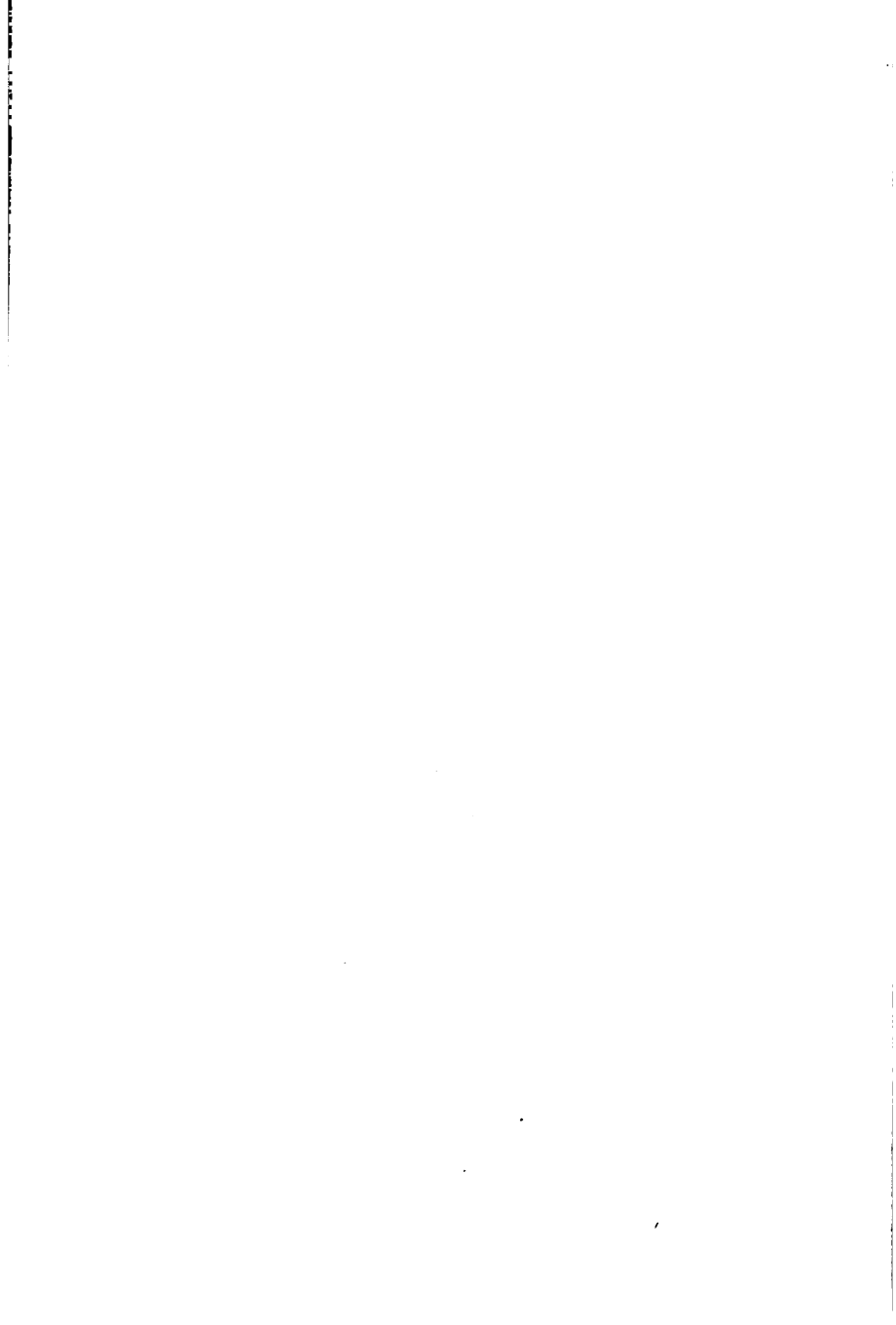
who went away to seek his fortune and came home after many years' absence a rich man. From that moment, George became uneasy, left home, lived over again the life he had read of, returned a millionaire, and paid all his father's debts. The story of Robinson Crusoe has sent to sea more sailors, and better men, than the press gang has done. The story of Washington's telling the truth about the hatchet and the cherry tree has made many a truth-teller. Scott's early reading of the old traditions and legends gave rise to the Waverley Novels; and the whole body of pastoral fiction came from Addison's sketches of Sir Roger De Coverley in the *Spectator*. Many a youth having read of the humble shepherd-boy who freed his terror-stricken countrymen from the defiant taunts and scowls of the champion Goliath has been fired with a similar spirit as if by magic,—while the story of the cruel fate of the Maid of Orleans has bidden many a fanatic — stand back! What women reading the life of Elizabeth, or the Good Queen Bess, as she was sometimes called, does not feel soul-stirred as through the telescopic glass of history the valorous queen is seen robed on horseback riding through the ranks and thus addressing her

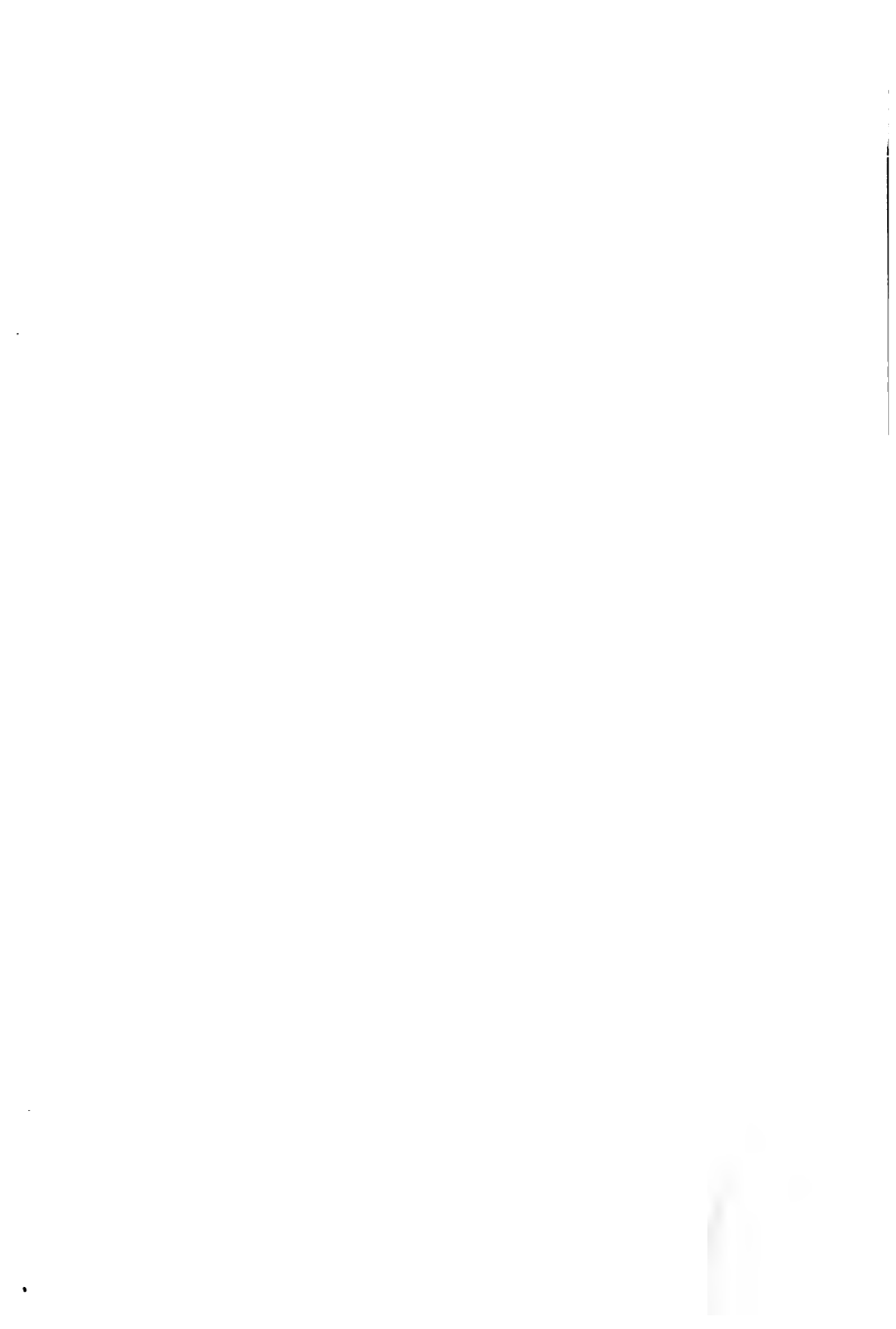
men;—"My men, I have not come amongst you for recreation and disport; for honor or amusement; I have come to live or to die amongst you. I have resolved to lay down to God my honor and my blood, my kingdom and my people even in the dust. I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a King and a King of England too, and think foul scorn that Spain or Parma, or Modena or any other prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm." The narrative of the life and labors of William Carey, the Northampton shoemaker, and the disclosure of his plan for translating the scriptures into the different dialects of India whereby millions in that land enjoy the privilege of reading them in their own tongue, has stimulated many a missionary to go and do likewise. The famous Dr. Marrison, a last-maker of Newcastle, to whom religion in China owes so much; Dr. Milnes, the herd-boy in Aberdeenshire; Dr. Adam Clarke, the humble Irish boy; John Forster, the weaver; Andrew Fuller, the farm servant; William Jay of Bath, the herdsman; Zwingli, the Swiss reformer emerging from the Shepherd's cot; Melancthon, that good man taken from the armor-er's shop; Martin Luther, the avowed enemy

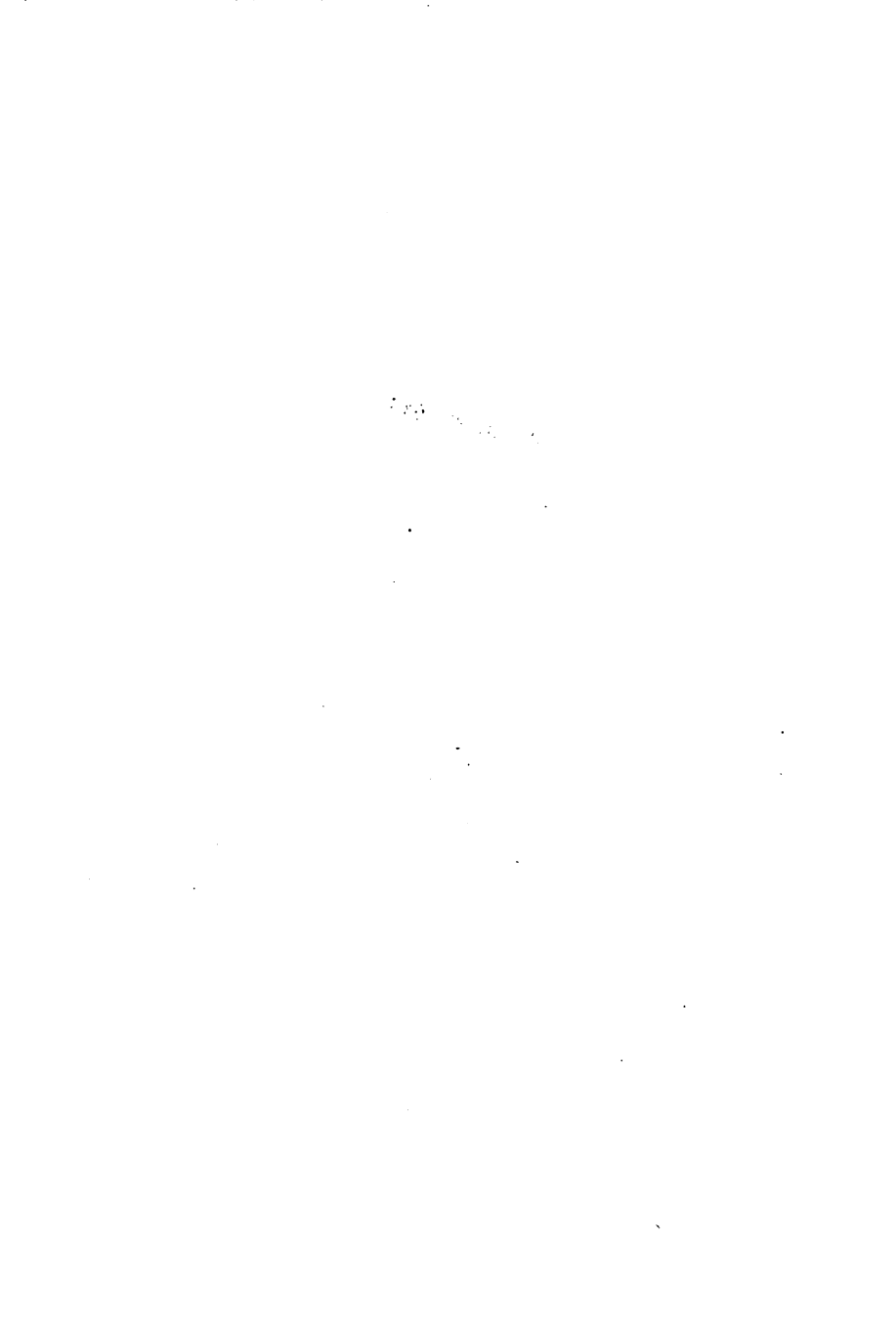
of Popedom from the miner's cot; the illiterate fishermen drawn from the Galilean Lake, and an astounding galaxy of illustrious characters are powerful incentives to those who desire to immortalize themselves. Read the lives of such men, for nothing so greatly assists in tempering and toning the mind to bring it in touch with the broad scenery of life as association with the truly great. There is a peculiar freshness and an ever-living sweetness in the oft-quoted words of Longfellow:—

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time.”

FINIS

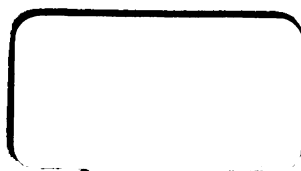


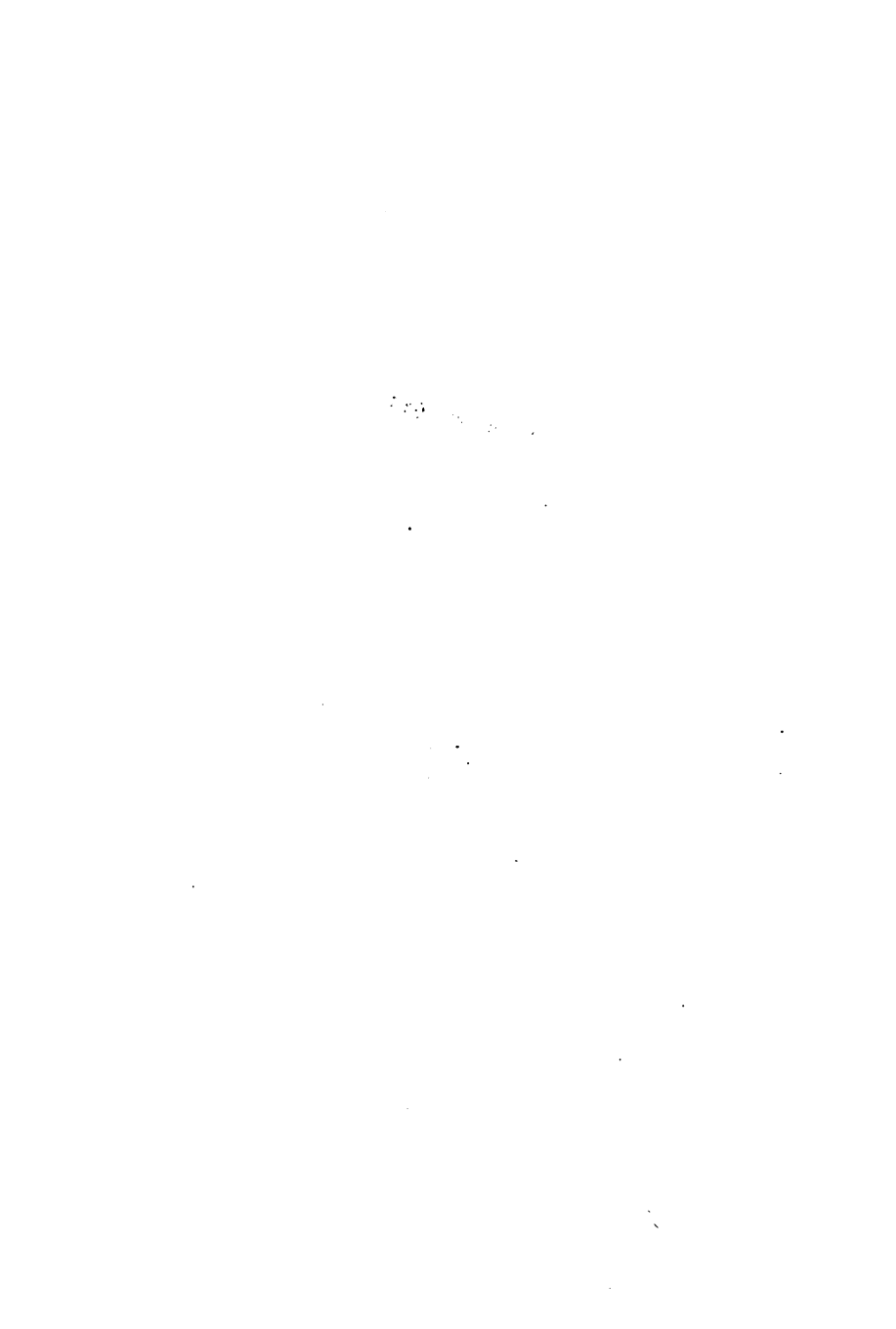






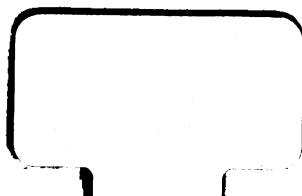
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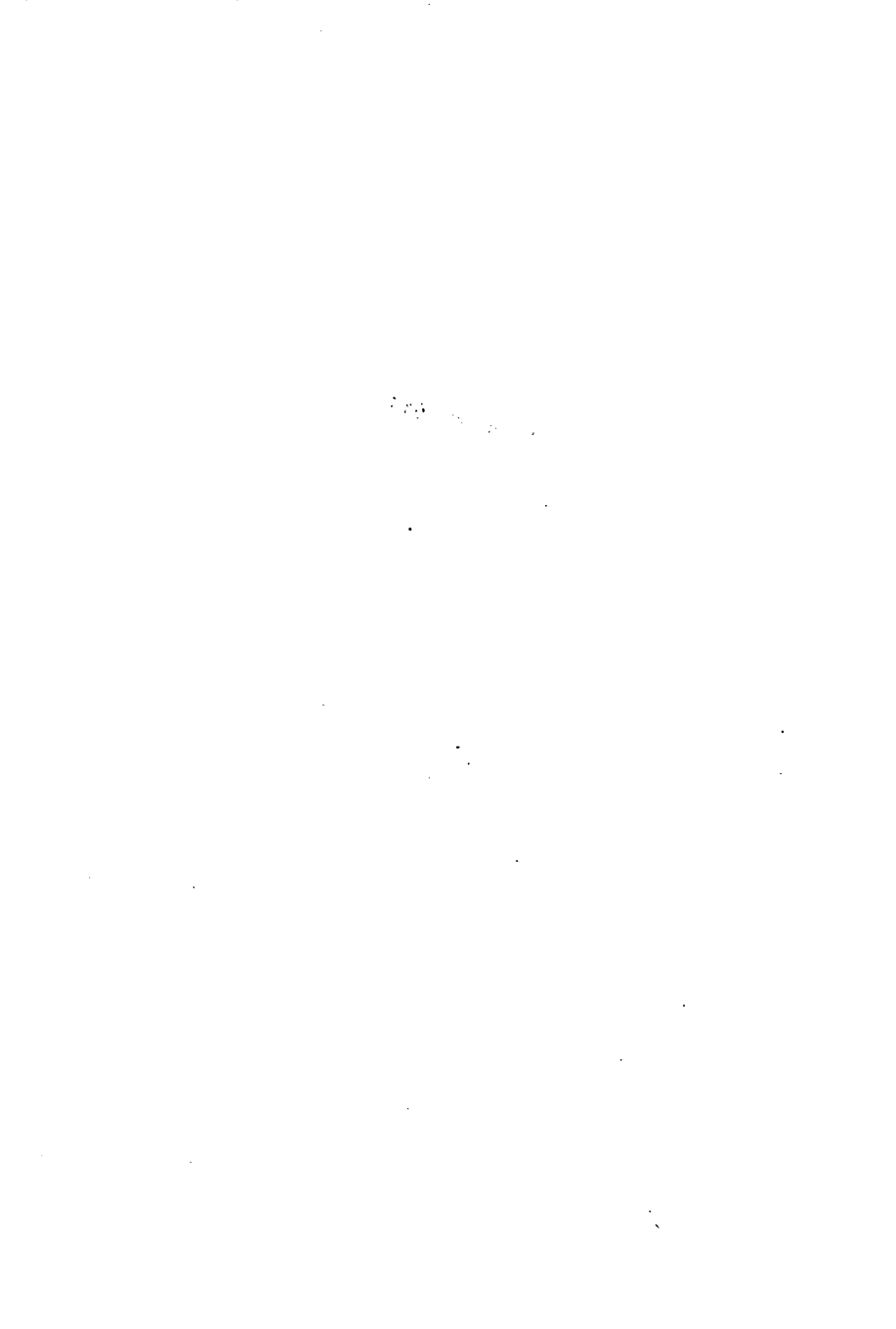






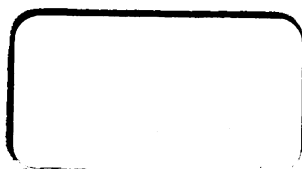
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